

Interpretive Programs Guide

For Teachers and Youth Leaders

A variety of interpretive programs create avenues for nature discovery and conservation education through high-quality indoor and outdoor experiences.



Cape Girardeau Conservation Campus Nature Center
2289 County Park Drive
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701



CAPE GIRARDEAU CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER

Connecting People with the Land

General Information

The Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center is operated by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Programs and exhibits relate to the protection and management of Missouri's fish, forest and wildlife resources. All interpretive programs are conducted by experienced naturalists and provide alternative learning experiences.

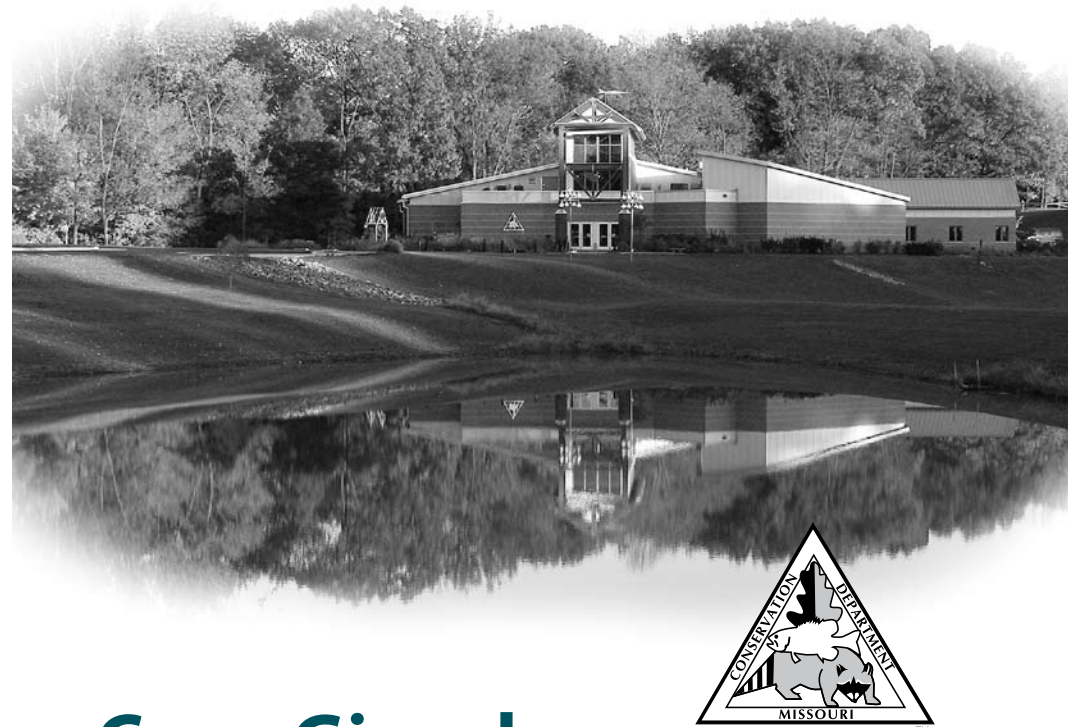
The nature center is located just east of the intersection of Interstate 55 (Exit 99) and Kingshighway (State Highway 61) within Cape Girardeau County Park North. It is open Tuesday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

What to Expect

The nature center has an auditorium, classrooms, a scientific research lab, freshwater aquariums and opportunities for wildlife viewing. Hands-on exhibits for all ages allow explorations of the natural communities of southeast Missouri—forest, marsh, swamp and river. Visitors also learn about the connections between people and the land through exhibits of Native American artifacts and primitive tools used to harvest plants and animals. Two miles of nature trails traverse the White Oak Trace, which features rolling river hills with sinkholes, deep hollows and ravines covered with prominent stands of tulip poplar and oak.

Making Your Trip More Enjoyable

- Keep your group small. Assign group leaders and divide larger groups into smaller units for exploration.
- Leaders should visit the area and prepare their students before their scheduled visit. Determine travel time to the nature center. Share information with all the adult leaders.
- Explain rules to the children in advance so they know what to expect. Remind them to wear comfortable shoes and clothing suitable for the weather and outdoor activities.
- Name tags, especially for younger students, are helpful. Make name tags in the shapes of plants and animals as a pre-trip project. School colors or other forms of group affiliation are helpful when multiple groups are present.
- Arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled program. The quality and length of your program will be reduced if you are late, or it may be cancelled since many groups are scheduled back-to-back.



Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center

(573) 290-5218

Directions

The nature center is located just east of the intersection of Interstate 55 (Exit 99) and Kingshighway (State Highway 61) within Cape Girardeau County Park North.

Hours

Tuesday through Saturday: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Reservation Guidelines

- To arrange a naturalist-guided program, call (573) 290-5218 at least two weeks in advance. Reservations are taken on a first-come basis. Field trips in the spring may require advanced reservation of up to six months. A 24-hour notice of cancellation is requested.
- Programs may be scheduled Tuesday through Friday on the hour for groups of 10 or more participants. Groups are limited to one program topic per visit and two naturalist-guided programs per year. Registration for the following calendar year begins September 15.
- The center requires a minimum of one adult to supervise 10 children, and additional adults for groups with younger children or special needs are recommended. Adult escorts should remain with the group at all times and are responsible for group management. Please let us know in advance if members of the group have special needs, such as learning or physical challenges.
- Many of the programs do not occur in the exhibit gallery or on the trails. Additional time to explore these areas may need to be added to your visit. Please let us know if you plan to spend more time in addition to the program.
- After your reservation has been made, a confirmation letter will be mailed to you approximately two weeks before your visit. Please call the nature center staff immediately if this schedule needs to be changed.
- If you are unable to schedule a guided program, your group is welcome to visit any time during our regular business hours. Prior to your visit, ask about exhibit scavenger hunts and other age-appropriate activities that you may conduct with your students. We ask that all groups pre-register before visiting the nature center to let us know how many people are coming and the estimated time of arrival.



- When you arrive, send an adult to check in at the front desk before unloading students. Buses should park in designated areas.
- If you bring lunch, make arrangements to eat in County Park North or County Park South. Many shelters within park grounds are available on a first-come, first-served basis, but may be reserved by calling the Cape Girardeau County Park at (573) 335-4146.

Rules to Share With Your Group

- The land surrounding the nature center is a wildlife refuge, and all plants and animals are protected. Do not harm any animals or their homes; do not collect any natural materials including rocks, leaves, mushrooms or nuts; and do not pick plants.
- Running is prohibited on the trails and in the building.
- Stay on the trails to avoid poison ivy and reduce erosion.
- Always walk behind the trail guide. Other individuals and classes may use the area at the same time, so be considerate.
- Pick up all trash. Litter is unsightly and may be dangerous to visitors and wildlife.
- Food and drinks are not allowed in the center. Coolers and bottles of water may be brought inside the building and set off to the side for later use outside.



Preschool

All preschool programs last one hour. If weather permits, groups spend half the time outdoors. Preschool groups are limited to no more than 20 participants who must be at least 3 years old.

Fantastic Frogs

Welcome to the world of frogs! Find out what makes these amphibians so fascinating and important. Where do they live and what do they need? Explore the frog life cycle through an interactive story. *Two 30-minute rotations*



Let's Go Fishing

What do you need for a successful fishing trip? Identify the equipment needed to catch the "big one" and listen to an interactive story about when to keep a fish and when to release it. Make a fishing permit and visit our indoor "classroom pond" to get hooked on fishing. *Two 30-minute rotations*

Sensory Adventure

Get ready for an adventure! Use senses of smell, touch, sight and sound to discover more about nature as we take a short hike and explore the area surrounding the nature center. *One 45-minute outdoor program*



Additional Program Topics

Interactive auditorium programs are designed for large groups and are available upon request. The target grade-level range is third through eighth. Programs are 50 minutes.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Alligators in Missouri? Sirens that swim? You bet! Take a look at a few of the reptiles and amphibians that call southeast Missouri home, and discover ways to recognize them. **GLEs:** LO1E5c, LO1E5d, EC1D4a

Mammals of Missouri

Learn fascinating facts about Missouri's wild mammals—many of which make their homes in the diverse habitats of southeast Missouri. Find out what they are, where they live and how they survive. **GLEs:** LO1E5c, EC1D4a

Feathered Fliers

Missouri is diverse in its feathered fowl. Explore different habitats and niches to recognize similarities and differences in birds and their specialized characteristics. **GLEs:** LO1E5c, EC1A4b, EC1D4a, EC3C4b, EC3C4c

Incredible Insects

Are they pests or are they your pals? There are more insects than there are all other animals combined in Missouri. Discover what they are and why we need them. Learn why bees waggle, how insects see and other fascinating characteristics. **GLEs:** LO1E5c, EC3C4b



Ninth Through Twelfth Grade

All programs are from 1½ to 2¼ hours, depending on the group's size and the amount of time spent outdoors. Programs include two 45-minute rotations. Unless otherwise noted, rotations are limited to 30 students. A third rotation may include time in the exhibit gallery or on the trails.

Fly Fishing

Fly fishing is an art form, as well as a sport. Become skilled in fly fishing by learning the techniques and terminology that distinguishes this method from other means of harvesting fish. Practice proper ways to reel in and safely release a fish with commonly used flies. Each rotation is limited to 15.

Going, Going Gone

Did you know that a little more than 100 years ago, a wild parakeet species—now extinct—lived right here in Missouri? Animals and plants in southeast Missouri are faced with perils for survival every day. Through games and hands-on activities, you'll discover some of the threatened and endangered species of our region and learn how to become a steward of the environment. **CLEs:** EC1DBIOa, EC1DBIOb

Swamps, Sloughs and Marshes

"Swampeast" Missouri comes alive as students get beneath the water's surface and observe the rich diversity of wetland habitats in the state. Collect and classify aquatic insects, and examine the unique biological, chemical and physical attributes of wetlands. **CLEs:** EC1BBIOa, EC1DBIOb

Hunting and Wildlife Management

Patience, practice and perseverance—anyone can succeed with shooting sports! Experience what it takes to bring dinner home, and identify why hunting plays an important role in wildlife management. Participate in basic archery skills and practice firearms safety by using a LaserShot simulation program. Each rotation is limited to 15. **CLEs:** EC1ABIOb, EC1BBIOa, EC1DBIOb

Diversity Investigation

Southeast Missouri is home to some of the most diverse plant and animal species in our state—some of which are unique within the state. Discover the reason for this phenomenon while collecting data and making observations among the various habitats at the nature center. Learn the basics of GPS and habitat inventory mapping through this hands-on program. Each rotation is limited to 15. **CLEs:** EC1ABIOb, EC1ABIOc, EC1BBIOa, EC1DBIOa, EC1DBIOb

Kindergarten Through Second Grade

All programs are from one to two hours, depending on the group's size and the amount of time spent outdoors. Unless otherwise noted, programs are limited to two 30-minute rotations of no more than 30 students per rotation. A third rotation may include time in the exhibit gallery or on the trails.

Super Seeds

Hitchhiking? Parachuting? Seeds lead adventurous lives! Go on a hike to look for seeds, organize them into groups by method of travel and make seed life cycles to take home. Examine plant parts, functions and life cycles as we reveal the importance of seeds and plants to humans and wildlife.

GLEs: LO1A1a, LO1A1b, LO1DKa, LO1D1a, LO1E1a, EC1A1a

Nature Detective

Explore nature! Look, listen, smell and touch! Take a short hike and solve riddles to reach the next destination. Each trail stop will provide an opportunity for participants to use their senses and learn about the wildlife living near the nature center. *One 45- to 60-minute trail walk*

GLEs: LO1A1a, LO1A1b, LO1D1b, LO1D1d, LO1E1a

Monarch Magic

Investigate the magical life cycle of the monarch butterfly through kinesthetic games and hands-on activities. Discover the fascinating ways butterflies change as they grow and the amazing journeys they take as adults.

GLEs: LO1B2a, LO1B2c, LO1D1d, LO3DKa, LO3D2a



Furs, Feathers and Scales

What color is your coat? Is it soft and fuzzy or smooth and sleek? Ponder these questions as we take a close look at the similarities and differences among some of southeast Missouri's animals. Through the use of pelts, turtle shells and other animal artifacts, you will see and feel how different characteristics help animals survive in various habitats.

GLEs: LO1A1a, LO1DKa, LO1D1b, LO1D1d, LO1E1a

Third Through Fifth Grade

All programs are from 1½ to 2¼ hours, depending on the group's size and the amount of time spent outdoors. Programs include two 45-minute rotations of no more than 30 students per rotation. A third rotation may include time in the exhibit gallery or on the trails.



Insect Intrigue

Learn about insects from the inside out! Collect insects with nets and explore the basics of insect anatomy and life cycles. Through hands-on activities, you'll discover some of the remarkable characteristics that these animals have for survival. **GLEs:** LO1E5a, EC1A4a, EC3C4b

Leaf it to Trees

Bark, leaves, fruits and nuts—which comes from which and what comes from what? As we hike on White Oak Trace, you'll learn how to identify common Missouri trees by using a walking dichotomous key and by observing each tree's special characteristics.

GLEs: LO1A3a, LO1D3a, LO1E5a, LO1E5b, LO1E5e, EC1A4a, EC1A4b, EC1D4a

Tools of the Trade

Hone primitive skills and get a glimpse of the past. Learn about tools primitive people used to survive, how they were made, natural resources that were used (animal, plant or mineral) and how they compare to modern tools. **GLEs:** EC1D4a, EC2A4c

Wetland Investigator

Leap into wetland ecology! Plunge into a living and growing wetland to dip-net for aquatic insects and other swamp critters. Explore what eats what and discover their amazing characteristics. Get an up-close look at what makes these habitats special and important to Missouri's heritage. Study other live animals in the wetland food chain to learn about the roles they play in the ecosystem. **GLEs:** LO1D5a, EC1D4a, EC3C4a, EC3C4b

Sixth Through Eighth Grade

All programs are from 1½ to 2¼ hours, depending on the group's size and the amount of time spent outdoors. Programs include two 45-minute rotations of no more than 30 students per rotation. A third rotation may include time in the exhibit gallery or on the trails.

CSI: The Trace

Mysteries abound along the White Oak Trace. Travel along the trail in search of evidence to reveal who and what was involved in a mystery. By taking notes and measurements, or using field guides and information stations, student groups work together to determine the players of the "crime."

GLEs: EC1D6a, EC1D6b, EC1D6c

Swamp Sleuth

Ever wondered what it was like to be immersed in one of Missouri's vast wetlands? Transform into a wetland with the use of props, costumes and live animals to investigate what these unique habitats require to thrive. Dip-net for aquatic insects, track down frogs and observe the plants and animals that call Missouri swamps home.

GLEs: EC1D6a, EC1D6c, EC3C6a, EC3C6b

Fishing Basics

It's time to get hooked on fishing! Find out why and how people fish. Discover different Missouri species and the importance of conservation efforts to help maintain the wise use of these valuable resources. Practice casting and go fishing in the kids-only fishing pond. Each rotation is limited to 15. **GLEs:** EC1D6a, EC3C6a, EC3C6b

A River Adventure

Through the use of a model river, you'll discover the history of the mighty Mississippi and how humans have impacted this river. Explore the relationships and characteristics of organisms that call this river home. You'll identify fish by using a walking dichotomous key, develop an aquatic food web and design your own species of fish.

GLEs: EC1A6a, EC1D6a, EC1D6b, EC1D6c, EC2A6a, EC3C6a, EC3C6b

Archery/Primitive Hunting

Ready, aim, shoot! Discuss the history behind archery and learn the basic steps to shooting a bull's-eye. Track animals and identify the appropriate primitive-hunting method needed to bring home dinner. Each rotation is limited to 15. **GLEs:** EC1D6a, EC3C6a, EC3C6b